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Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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AGENDA ITEM 107: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (A/50/3, A/50/38, A/50/110, A/50/163, A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/257/Rev.1-E/1995/61/Rev.1, A/50/346, A/50/369, A/50/378, A/50/398, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/538, A/50/691 and A/50/747-E/1995/126)

AGENDA ITEM 165: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (continued) (A/50/744; A/CONF.177/20 and Add.1)

1. Mrs. LEGWAILA (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that equality between men and women and the empowerment of women were major concerns of her region and, accordingly, the Governments of the SADC countries were fully committed to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. For that aim to be achieved, the administrative machinery should be strengthened at the national level to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender issues through the entire governmental system. There must be dialogue and partnerships between Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, including the private sector, which were major forces for change. The follow-up at intergovernmental level must be coordinated with national efforts. The delay in making available the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the Conference (A/50/744) was regrettable. As a result, the SADC countries had not had sufficient time to make substantive proposals on the report. Their first reaction was, however, that the general thrust of the report was at variance with the Platform for Action.

2. If gender issues were to be mainstreamed through the United Nations, then the entire system must change. There was a need to create within the United Nations an identifiable focal point for the coordination of gender issues and with overall responsibility for performance. The mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women should be strengthened to that end. Currently, there was much duplication of effort, with committees, functional commissions and the Economic and Social Council debating the same items. It would be more beneficial to hold briefing sessions with the agencies of the United Nations system and, since much work was done in the field, to establish a mechanism for feedback. The Economic and Social Council should dedicate one high-level segment in the next two years to the advancement of women and the implementation of the Platform for Action with a view to formulating clear policy guidelines for its functional commissions. In order to monitor the implementation of the commitments made at Beijing, States should be requested to provide progress reports which would then be deliberated upon, along the lines of the system used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was crucial that those issues should be addressed urgently in order to maintain the great momentum created by the Beijing Conference.

3. If the international community was to respond effectively to the Conference agenda, it was vital to make available the necessary resources. The SADC countries regretted the downscaling of the United Nations agencies dealing with the advancement of women, when the Platform for Action called for their

strengthening. As the Organization celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, the time had come for the United Nations to live up to the noble ideal of equality between men and women enshrined in its Charter.

4. Mrs. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that in developing countries, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries, women continued to be subject to discrimination, violence and degrading treatment and were most vulnerable to the effects of increasing poverty and conflicts. Burkina Faso attached special importance to the situation of rural women and the education of young girls. Her Government had set up a fund to support remunerative activities by women and provided them with literacy courses and training related to health care and the management of cooperatives, shops and village pharmacies. In order to improve the status of women in the long-term, Burkina Faso stressed the education and training of young girls and had adopted a national action plan to the year 2000.

5. The Beijing Platform for Action contained specific provisions for following up the Fourth World Conference on Women at both the regional and international level. Work should begin immediately to achieve the objectives laid down. Developing countries, particularly the least developed ones, required all-round assistance to obtain the best results. National action plans should be drawn up on the basis of the results achieved in Beijing. A new type of partnership based on solidarity and expanded cooperation should be established between Governments and the various organizations working to promote the advancement of women.

6. Her delegation attached great importance to the invitation to the Secretary-General to establish the a high-level post to act as his adviser on gender issues. Such an adviser would help ensure the implementation of the Platform for Action throughout the system in close cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women. In that connection, she stressed that existing bodies should be strengthened instead of setting up new ones, particularly in view of the current financial crisis. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a goal-oriented inter-agency task force on the advancement of women (A/50/744, para. 89) should be given thorough consideration before any decision was taken.

7. Burkina Faso commended the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for its work in the field, and hoped that the Fund would be strengthened in line with the recommendations made in Beijing. UNIFEM should further increase its cooperation with its partners in the field; and the Fund's activities should be raised to the level of those of UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was the only instrument of its kind to promote the integration of women and enable them to cope better with new challenges in a changing world. In view of the results achieved through its research and training, the Institute's mandate should be strengthened by providing it with a stable financial basis and appointing a director without delay in order to enable it to follow up the results achieved in Beijing in the best possible manner. Her delegation believed that INSTRAW and UNIFEM complemented one another and did not feel that the proposal to merge the two would yield positive results. Accordingly, she requested the Secretariat to

withdraw the proposal on their merger, particularly in view of the recommendations by the Beijing Conference concerning the Institute.

8. She noted with satisfaction the measures taken to improve the status of women in the Secretariat and supported the submission of quarterly plans for filling a proportion of vacancies over the next biennium with women candidates. The results of the study referred to in paragraph 10 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/691) should be applied to fill two of every three vacancies with women in order to redress existing imbalances as soon as possible. In that regard, Member States should select qualified female candidates in order to propose them for recruitment to the Secretariat. Her delegation deplored the geographical imbalance in the break-down of women staff members according to region of origin and urged that that imbalance should be corrected. She noted with regret the reduction in 1995 in the percentage of women at the Assistant Secretary-General, P-4, P-2 and P-1 levels and called upon the Secretariat to strengthen its measures concerning the promotion, assignment and appointment of women in order to achieve the desired parity in accordance with the Platform for Action.

9. Lastly, her delegation expressed its concern at the increase in the international traffic in women and the recruitment of young girls in many areas of the world. Burkina Faso supported the recommendations by the Special Rapporteur dealing with that matter, particularly the adoption of legislation to prosecute persons involved in such trafficking.

10. Ms. BAIARDI (Paraguay) said that her country's Constitution established equal civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for men and women; and the recent reform of the Civil Code had put an end to the very unfavourable legal situation of women that had existed under the previous, undemocratic regime. In 1992, Paraguay had established the Secretariat for Women, which formulated policies to promote equal opportunities for women in all areas of life, including participation in political decision-making, access to employment and education. In the past five years, the country had ratified major international human rights instruments; and its new Constitution reflected the progress made.

11. Paraguay was in the midst of a far-reaching educational reform aimed at consolidating democracy, reaffirming human rights and protecting the environment. The Secretariat for Women and the Ministry of Education and Worship were implementing a programme to promote equal opportunities for women on the basis of a bilingual, non-sexist educational system and equal access to education and the labour market.

12. The Government had established an inter-agency commission, which was made up of several ministries and governmental bodies and was carrying out a national plan to prevent and punish violence against women. Begun in 1994, the plan gave due attention to the victims of violence and encouraged the reporting of physical abuse. While there were no specific norms relating to reproductive rights, the Government implemented family-planning programmes based on respect for life and freedom of choice in accessing those services. Paraguay had established the National Reproductive Health and Family Planning Council, which functioned within the constitutional framework of the right of persons to

determine freely the number of their children and to receive training, scientific guidance and services in that field. Lastly, she expressed satisfaction at the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and hoped that it would be an effective instrument to overcome obstacles in achieving greater representation of women in decision-making and eliminate acts of violence against women in all areas of their lives.

13. Mrs. ZACKLIN (Venezuela) said that the work of the United Nations system was essential in order to consolidate the commitments undertaken by Member States and the international community at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and noted with satisfaction the statement in paragraph 50 of the report on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/50/744) that the Secretary-General was strongly committed to assuming responsibility for coordination of policy within the United Nations for the implementation of the Platform for Action and for the mainstreaming of a system-wide gender perspective in all activities of the United Nations. Venezuela, a standard-bearer in the defence of the rights of women, attached great importance to the results of the Fourth World Conference. Her country's Constitution firmly enshrined the principles of equality, which promoted the participation of women in decision-making. Venezuelan women occupied the highest positions in the country's political, economic and cultural life. Sixty per cent of the judges in Venezuela were women and a similar percentage was found in its foreign service and civil service. Women constituted the majority in Venezuelan universities and did not lag behind in the private sector.

14. Her Government was committed to reducing poverty through social and economic strategies designed to meet basic needs and to protect human rights through an equitable distribution of income and wealth. The Government had also taken steps to eliminate violence against women through preventive measures, promote women's health and utilize education as an indispensable tool for guaranteeing equality of opportunities for men and women.

15. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that the commitment to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights of women, including sexual and reproductive rights, was an important achievement reflected in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Nevertheless, that achievement must be reinforced by an equal commitment to eliminate poverty and underdevelopment in order to attain the goal of equality, development and peace by the year 2000. While many of the types of discrimination and inequality impeding the advancement of women were universal, the dangers and shortcomings which threatened the welfare of women were particularly great in the developing countries, where war, the external-debt burden and structural-adjustment measures had the greatest impact on the most vulnerable groups of society.

16. The follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women should be based on an integrated, global approach building on the progress achieved at the recent major international conferences in the economic and social field. The Platform for Action must be implemented by all United Nations bodies, funds and programmes. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference (A/50/744), she expressed regret that, on the pretext of lack of resources, it had not been possible to establish the high-level post for integrating a gender perspective into the work of the

Organization. At the same time, it was surprising to note that in other areas, particularly human rights, resources were not spared in order to meet other interests.

17. Cuba had already begun a widespread process of publicizing and discussing the commitments undertaken in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Among other initiatives, she drew attention to the preparation of a national seminar in cooperation with UNDP on the implementation of the Platform for Action with the participation of State institutions and non-governmental organizations, in order to draw up a national action plan as a strategy for developing the role of women and promoting their participation in society. Lastly, in view of the renewed commitment to strengthening United Nations institutions dealing with the advancement of women, her delegation felt that the time had come to consider how to improve and strengthen INSTRAW and UNIFEM, rather than merge them.

18. Mr. AL-HITTI (Iraq) said that the Iraqi Constitution guaranteed women equality. Iraq was a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Many mechanisms had been adopted in order to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, including the formation of a national council. Numerous laws had been promulgated to guarantee women's rights in the fields of health, literacy, education, work, participation in politics, decision-making and economic and social development. Women's participation in political life in Iraq had increased steadily over the years, and currently 27 of the 250 members of the National Assembly were women.

19. All the measures taken by the Iraqi Government over more than a decade were currently being severely affected because of the continuation of the unjust economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, despite the fact that the conditions which had justified them no longer existed. The accumulated effects of those sanctions had reached disastrous levels and affected every level of Iraqi society, particularly vulnerable groups. Lofty goals such as equality, development and peace, the watchwords of the Beijing Conference, were impossible to realize in the absence of equality between States, when conflict and enmity was substituted for peace and when sanctions were imposed instead of assistance being offered.

20. The most serious problem currently facing Iraqi women was the severe shortage of medicines and food caused by the sanctions. Scores of children, women and elderly people were dying every day, as had been stated in the reports of many United Nations bodies and human rights organizations. A recent UNICEF report had stated that 3 million Iraqis were exposed to serious danger because of lack of food and medicine. A recent British Red Cross report had also stated that Iraqis, especially children, were dying for lack of food and medicine. The United Nations Centre for Human Rights had reported growing concern amongst international humanitarian agencies. The World Food Programme (WFP) had estimated that 4 million Iraqis, including 2.4 million children under five years of age, were extremely malnourished. A senior official of WFP had stated in September 1995, that in Iraq, he had observed the worst scenario of his working life, and that the dangerous shortage of food and drugs had caused irreversible harm to a whole generation of Iraqis.

21. He quoted from strategic objective E.3 of the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20, para. 145 (h) and (i)), which called upon Governments and organizations to refrain from any unilateral measure that impeded development and the full enjoyment of economic and social rights; it reaffirmed that food and medicine should not be used as a tool for political pressure, and called for measures to alleviate the impact of economic sanctions on women and children. The sanctions imposed on Iraqi women and children constituted a violation of international human rights instruments. He pleaded that the voices of the women, children and elderly victims of the sanctions should be heard, and their suffering should not be forgotten.

22. Mrs. SANDRU (Romania) said that her delegation regarded the Fourth World Conference on Women as a turning point for the future of women world wide. It had enabled the international community to assess progress made towards the goals of equality, development and peace set out in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and, at the same time, to set the women's agenda for the next century. It was now important to ensure a coordinated follow-up to the Beijing Conference and the other recent international conferences dealing with social, economic and humanitarian issues.

23. In Romania, the structural transformations initiated in recent years had adversely affected social and economic conditions, in particular with respect to women. Further efforts were still required to enhance women's participation in decision-making and to balance responsibility for family care more equitably. By contrast, women and girls enjoyed adequate access to education and health. The high proportion of female employers in the private sector was evidence of women's creativity and entrepreneurial abilities.

24. The Romanian Government was aware that it bore primary responsibility for the advancement of women. In 1981, Romania had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In addition, the Constitution, Labour and Family Codes prohibited discrimination on grounds of gender, religion and nationality. The Government had recently set up a department for the advancement of women within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Central objectives of its policy on women were the reduction of unemployment among women; the enhancement of social protection, in particular for vulnerable groups such as single mothers and low-income families; the implementation of special programmes for older women and those living in rural areas; the promotion of women to senior management and decision-making positions; the re-evaluation of women's household work; and the improvement of legislation on the status of women in society.

25. Action at global, regional and national levels to implement the Beijing Platform for action must be harmonized in order to mobilize resources effectively and to avoid duplication of effort and waste. The United Nations policy-making bodies and those directly concerned with women's issues would play a crucial role in that process, as well as in mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout the United Nations system. Her delegation fully supported the proposals made in that regard by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

26. Romania attached particular importance to the regional follow-up to the Beijing Conference. There was a need to strengthen the institutional capacity of the United Nations regional commissions and their women's focal points to enable them to respond to the specific needs and expectations of women in the various regions. Before the Beijing Conference, Romania had proposed that an international centre for countries of Central and Eastern Europe with economies in transition should be created in Bucharest and that a regional meeting should be organized in Romania in cooperation with the United Nations to assess the outcome of the Beijing Conference. Romania hoped that, through such joint initiatives, the commitments of the Beijing Conference could be turned into action.

27. Mr. ALHADAD (Indonesia) said that, while women had made great strides towards equality since the inception of the United Nations, much remained to be done. The Fourth World Conference on Women had highlighted the areas where progress was still needed. The task of the international community was now to maintain the momentum and to implement fully the Declaration and Platform for Action. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to review the existing United Nations mechanisms for the advancement of women with a view to enhancing the Organization's capacity in support of global policy-making and mainstreaming.

28. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (A/50/398), while female participation in the labour market had increased significantly throughout the world, unequal access to economic opportunities had resulted in the feminization of poverty. Of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty, approximately 70 per cent were women. Yet the family responsibilities of women entering the labour market had not diminished. Stereotyped views of women reinforced those inequalities, making it difficult for women to attain de facto equality even while de jure equality had been reached. Only when traditional attitudes relegating women to a secondary role in society were overcome would the double burden of work performed by women begin to ease. As the international community shaped new paradigms placing people at the centre of development, the issue of equality must also be addressed. Investing in women's capabilities was the surest way to contribute to economic growth and must also be seen as valuable in itself.

29. In an effort to escape poverty, women were increasingly seeking employment in foreign countries, and all too often they were becoming victims of violence. Indonesia, as a major sending State of temporary migrant workers, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women migrant workers (A/50/378) and the appointment by the Commission on Human Rights of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women. Indonesia had also been pleased to sponsor Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/7, which had recommended, among other things, that the Commission on Human Rights should make the rights of women migrant workers one of its priority concerns.

30. Indonesia supported the request by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to relocate to Geneva since that would enable it to make human rights work more gender sensitive. His delegation was concerned at the constraints under which CEDAW operated and at the backlog of country reports awaiting its consideration. CEDAW must be given sufficient time

and resources to implement its mandate effectively, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/29.

31. Given the Organization's central role in promoting equality for women, the United Nations must itself be perceived as respecting the contribution women have to make. While the status of women in the Secretariat had improved modestly, the target of a 35-per-cent participation rate by women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 1995 was yet to be reached. It was to be hoped that the current financial situation would not affect women disproportionately. Indonesia would continue its efforts at national level to remove the remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and the full enjoyment by women of their rights.

32. Mrs. KALAJDZISALIHOVIC (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said it was recognized that peace was a prerequisite of development, equity and equality. The women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and all other parts of the world afflicted by aggression and armed conflict were painfully aware of that need. Images of suffering, mass rape and forced pregnancy were inextricably linked with the women of Bosnia and Herzegovina. To give statistics would not do justice to the scale of suffering. The current war being waged against her country had left scars on all the population, but the scars of the aggression which had been carried out against women would be felt by generations to come. Even during the course of the current peace negotiations, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and particularly the female population were still targeted for murder, rape or expulsion as ruthlessly as when the aggression had begun.

33. She stressed that all those who had committed crimes would be held individually responsible before the International Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia, under the statute of which rape was considered to be a war crime and a crime against humanity. She stressed the importance of the work of the Tribunal and requested that all the resources and support necessary should be made available to it to enable it to continue its work.

34. Against the odds, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina had won the battle for survival. Women there would face many challenges because of the numerous current problems in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. However, the women of Bosnia and Herzegovina refused to be victims and passive observers, but actively participated in the daily struggle for survival. Despite the difficult war circumstances, women had organized themselves and were actively involved in all fields, and were largely responsible for the continuing successful function of all structures of Bosnian society.

35. Women were also concerned with the future of the country, particularly peacemaking and peace-building, the promotion of the values of peace, human rights, tolerance, political dialogue and understanding. Peace had to be founded upon at least a minimum level of justice. Fascist ideology had therefore to be defeated legally, by means of the Tribunal; politically and culturally, by promoting democracy for all citizens and respecting all cultural, ethnic, and national diversity; and militarily, by strengthening the capabilities of the victim to defend those values. Free and democratic elections must be held as soon as basic respect for human rights had been

established, and refugees and displaced persons must be given the opportunity to return and vote in those elections.

36. Her country's long-term goal was for a democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina within internationally recognized borders, with a society which enjoyed the highest standards of human rights for all citizens and gave opportunities to all, including women. Women must not remain victims. Their direct participation in the rebuilding of society, restoration of the rule of law and reconciliation would represent an invaluable contribution to a just and lasting peace.

37. Mrs. CISSE (Mali) said that the statistics that had emerged from the 1980 Copenhagen Conference had been indicative of the many forms of discrimination against women. The Beijing Conference had confirmed that, despite endeavours to improve the status of women, major challenges still remained to be faced in that regard.

38. Her Government had long recognized the importance of including the status of women in its development programmes in order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. The establishment of a multi-party system in Mali had led to the emergence of a number of women's associations which concerned themselves with improving the lives of urban and rural women, and to the organization of the National Women's Forum, which had made an in-depth analysis of the institutional, social and cultural, legal, educational and productive situation of women, while documents stemming from it had provided a basis for defining a women's policy. In 1993, the Government had set up an Office for the Advancement of Women; its tasks included the creation of a data bank on women's problems and the provision of opinions, research and advisory services regarding the integration of women in national development. At the regional level, women coordinators were responsible for identifying specific women's problems and proposing appropriate solutions.

39. Mali supported the proposal to amend article 20 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in order to render the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women more efficient; it also welcomed the creation of the post of Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women.

40. Since INSTRAW was the only entity within the United Nations system devoted to research and training for the integration of women in development, the international community had a duty to support its maintenance and reinforcement.

41. Mr. DABBAS (Jordan) said that women must become equal partners with men in all facets of world affairs in order for humanity to realize its full potential. The Jordanian Government had adopted a positive attitude towards the integration of women into development, that was based on its Constitution, respect for human rights and the principles of the Holy Koran and the Islamic Shariah. Poverty and unemployment were still a major obstacle to the advancement of women. The Jordanian National Committee for Women had been established in 1992 as a policy forum, and its first achievement had been to draw up the national strategy for women. The main features of that strategy were the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, which had previously hindered the enjoyment of

their political, social and economic rights; the improvement of women's role in society, and support for their participation in social development and the work force, and the establishment of women's committees to promote education and training.

42. There were several non-governmental organizations in Jordan which specialized in promoting development, particularly on behalf of women. The two major ones were the Noor Al-Hussein Foundation and the Queen Alia Fund for Development, which aimed to improve the quality of life of underprivileged communities and to accelerate the integration of low-income women in development through innovative income-generating schemes. While much work remained to be done, it was clear that Jordan's public and private sectors were committed to women's advancement and the promotion of equal opportunities, the family being the basic unit of society, with women at its core.

43. Cooperation was the key to rehabilitation of the region's economies and their linkage to international systems and organizations. The women's sector in Jordan had benefited from UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM programmes, and his country looked forward to further collaboration with those and similar programmes.

44. In the Middle East, women's development required peace, stability and economic prosperity. The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and the North African economic summit held recently in Amman would help to sustain a new era of peace and development and improve quality of life in the region.

45. Mr. OTUYELU (Nigeria) said that in order to make the Beijing Conference a lasting success there was a need for commitment to the implementation of the programmes agreed upon. His delegation noted with appreciation the commitment by the United Nations Population Fund to implementing the Platform for Action through support for capacity-building, skill and leadership training for women.

46. Where UNIFEM was concerned, continued support was required in order to enhance its capacity for more effective action to eliminate poverty, promote food security, prevent violence against women and involve women more in decision-making.

47. The role of INSTRAW as a think-tank could not be over-emphasized. It should continue to receive international assistance to enhance its research capacity on issues relevant to women's advancement.

48. The Secretary-General's proposal to establish a high-level board (A/50/744, para. 61) to advise him on gender issues seemed unsatisfactory; it could become bogged down with administrative matters which could delay programme implementation. His delegation called for consideration of the recommendation concerning a senior adviser on gender issues (ibid., paras. 54-57), and would also support the mobilization of resources to strengthen international cooperation for the further empowerment of women.

49. Mrs. KOVALSKA (Ukraine), speaking on agenda item 165, said that the final documents of the several international conferences held since 1991 had served as a basis for consensus at the Beijing Conference. The Beijing Platform for

Action had emerged from it as a powerful agenda for women, based on the equation of human rights and women's rights.

50. In Ukraine, preparations for Beijing had begun with the establishment of the organizational committee and its plan of action. In 1995, the Committee for Women, Maternity and Childhood had been set up and the creation of appropriate bodies at the local level was envisaged in the near future. The central event of the preparations, however, had been the parliamentary hearings on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in July 1995, the recommendations of which provided for essential changes in the country's legislation as well as organizational measures to bring the situation of women into line with international standards.

51. The major tasks of national policy were to take measures to implement the Parliament's recommendations, to inform public opinion about the Beijing Conference and to involve grass-roots organizations in elaborating a national programme by and for women through the introduction of gender-sensitive approaches in all aspects of life.

52. Her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the delegation of Poland concerning the extension of the activities of UNIFEM to countries with economies in transition.

53. Ukraine supported paragraphs 34-36 of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/50/744), concerning regional and subregional follow-up, and stressed the importance of the preparatory work for the Beijing Conference done by the European Commission. It was convinced that the challenging tasks facing the European region in that regard required a permanent focal point on women's issues, and hoped that the integration of Ukraine into the European structures would contribute to developing the self-confidence of Ukrainian women. A better coordination of efforts for the protection of women's rights between European structures and the United Nations would also contribute to the common cause.

54. The key requirements for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the international level were the mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout the work of the United Nations and the mobilization of adequate resources. Her delegation also supported the proposed creation of a high-level post in the Office of the Secretary-General to that end.

55. Mrs. ACHARYA (Nepal) said that the Beijing Platform for Action was a landmark document in the history of women's human rights, but that there was a long way to go to eliminate discrimination against women in all parts of the world. At the same time, since women represented the majority of over 1 billion people living in poverty world wide, they should be given an equal opportunity to participate in the formulation of macroeconomic and social policies to eradicate poverty. The most important tasks were to empower women and ensure their participation in decision-making.

56. According to statistics, the number of women living in poverty had increased in recent years because they lacked economic opportunities and

autonomy as well as economic resources. Equitable social development which would empower women to mobilize environmental resources was a prerequisite for sustainable development.

57. The Government of Nepal was committed to raising the status of women, the majority of whom lived in rural areas and faced social discrimination. It had set up a Ministry of Women and Social Welfare and had initiated programmes such as education for girls, to promote the status of women.

58. Only through improving the economic, social, political, legal and cultural status of women was sustainable development and sustained economic growth possible. Governments and international organizations should endeavour to work on the basis of the integration of the gender perspective with adequate institutional and financial support.

59. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendations for the review of the implementation of the Platform for Action on a biennial basis and for the review and strengthening of the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women. Nepal was committed to the development of a society where men and women worked together to promote social progress and better standards of living within a framework of fundamental democratic values.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.